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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER

OF

STATE AID AND PENSIONS.

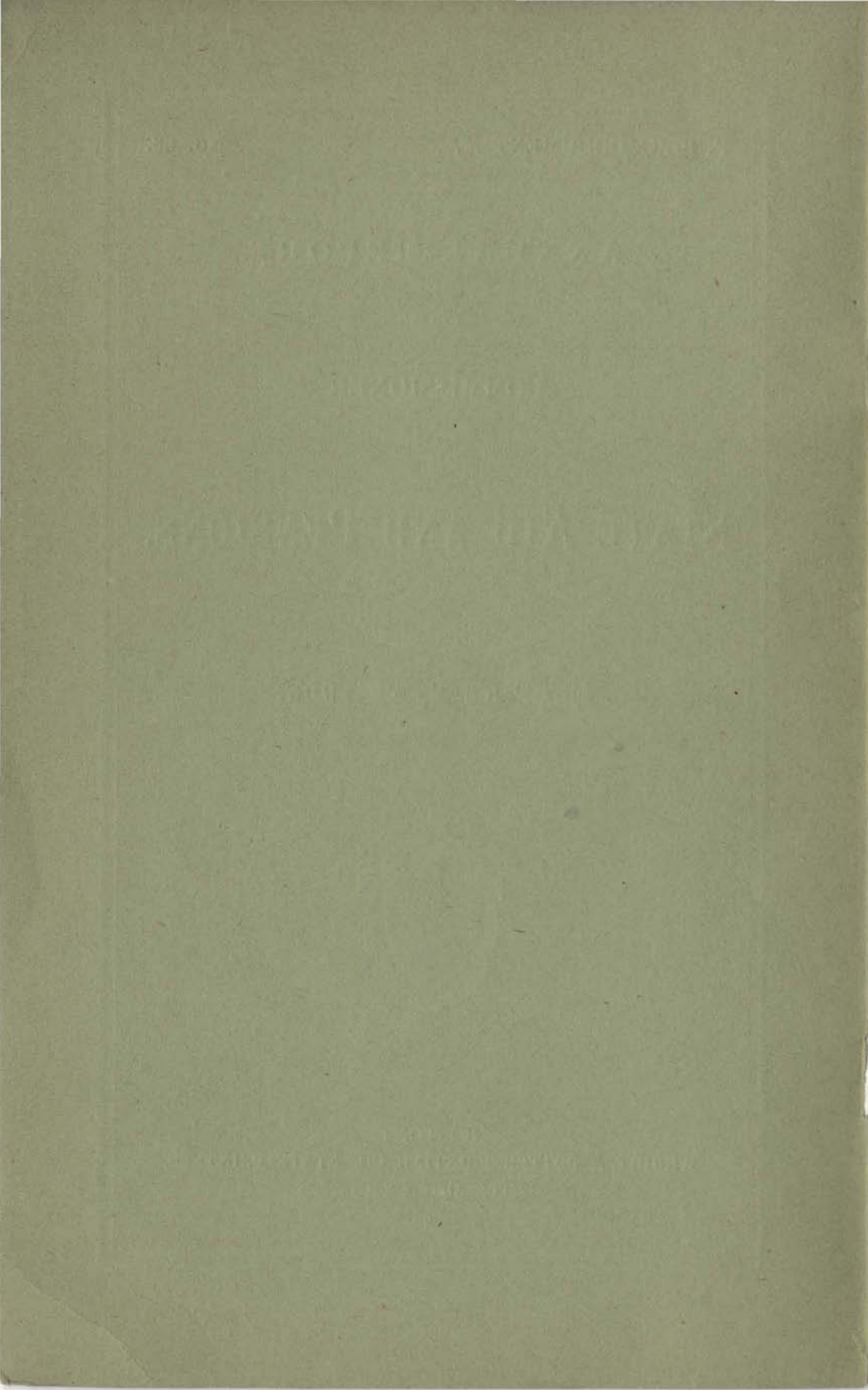
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FOR THE YEAR 1903.



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# Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF STATE AID AND PENSIONS,  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Jan. 14, 1904.

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives.*

I present herewith to your honorable bodies the annual report of the department of State Aid and Pensions, the part relating to State aid being for the year 1902 and that relating to pensions covering the year 1903.

Very respectfully,

CHARLES W. HASTINGS,  
*Commissioner.*



# REPORT.

## STATE AND MILITARY AID.

Disbursements of State and military aid and for the burial of indigent soldiers, sailors and marines, their wives, widows and dependent fathers and mothers, were made by 349 cities and towns in the Commonwealth during the year 1902, as follows : —

State aid to soldiers and dependents, civil war, . . . . .	\$701,947 04
State aid to soldiers and dependents, war with Spain, . . . . .	4,228 50
Military aid to soldiers and sailors, civil war, . . . . .	45,457 98
Military aid to soldiers and sailors, war with Spain, . . . . .	5,371 28
Burial expenses of indigent soldiers and dependents, . . . . .	27,066 02
Total for 1902, . . . . .	\$784,070 82

These figures show an expenditure in 1902 over 1901 of \$15,340.34, which was caused by an increase of disbursements in State aid cases. The expenses under military aid and burial of soldiers decreased, a little rising \$2,000.

Recipients of State aid on account of the civil war are classified as follows : —

Pensioned soldiers and sailors, . . . . .	7,015	Increase of 26
Wives of same, . . . . .	867	Increase of 14
Widows of same, . . . . .	6,536	Increase of 196
Dependent mothers, . . . . .	251	Decrease of 36
Dependent fathers, . . . . .	7	Decrease of 2
Army nurses, . . . . .	9	Decrease of 3

Net increase of cases during 1902, 195.

Average cost to State per person aided, per annum, about \$48.

Recipients of State aid on account of the war with Spain are classified as follows : —



Pensioned soldiers,	20
Widows,	28
Wives,	1
Dependent mothers,	21
Dependent fathers,	5
Children under fourteen,	28

An increase of 1 over 1901.

Military aid was extended to 825 soldiers and sailors of the civil war and to 84 of the war with Spain, at an expense to the State of \$50,829.26, — a decrease of \$1,272.55 from the previous year. Expenditures for military aid on account of the civil war will gradually decrease, but slowly; for although numbers die each year, the living, by reason of advanced age and increased disabilities, require a larger outlay for support.

In connection with the execution of this law, the commissioner desires to acknowledge the services rendered the department by Surg.-Gen. Robert A. Blood, whose semi-weekly examinations of military aid cases greatly facilitate the work of the office in determining the amount of aid, based on actual disabilities.

*Burial Expenses of Indigent Soldiers and their Wives,  
Widows, Mothers, and Army Nurses.*

Under the provisions of chapter 79 of the Revised Laws, as amended by chapter 292, Acts of 1902, there were buried 779 persons, classified as follows: —

Civil war: —	
Soldiers,	601
Widows,	108
Wives,	41
Mothers,	16
War with Spain: —	
Soldiers,	13
Total,	779

Expense to the State, \$27,066.02, — a decrease of \$804.63 from 1901.

By the provisions of chapter 250 of the Acts of 1902, the provisions of sections 20 and 21 of chapter 79 of the



Revised Laws, relative to the burial of indigent soldiers, were extended to include such army nurses as are entitled to State aid under existing laws.

The consolidation of the State pension agency with the department of State aid (see chapter 192, Acts of 1902) took effect on the first day of July, 1902. The union of the two offices has increased the efficiency and convenience of both, at reduced expense to the State.

The force of agents and clerks in the State aid office remains the same as in 1901, except that Maj. Francis A. Bicknell, who had served as agent since 1894, was appointed chief clerk, at an annual salary of \$1,500.

Dr. Henry Shaw, special agent for the investigation of cases involving questions of settlement, has hitherto been subject to call, and salaried at \$25 per month. In view of his valuable service as an expert on settlement law, coupled with his ability to diagnose the disabilities of applicants for aid, I recommend that Dr. Shaw be employed as a regular agent, with his time wholly at the disposal of the State, at a salary of \$600 a year.

The provisions of chapter 79 of the Revised Laws, for the payment of State and military aid, will expire with the year 1904. It will, therefore, be necessary for the present Legislature to take action upon the matter, if authority to continue this patriotic and beneficent aid is to exist after that time.

In view of the infirmities incident to advanced age, and slender resources of the great majority of persons receiving aid, and as it has ever been the practice of the Commonwealth to deal not only justly, but generously, with its old soldiers and sailors and their dependents, it can hardly be questioned that the Legislature will make provision to continue the present law, or have framed a new act, embodying all recent amendments and such changes as may be deemed advisable.

The question of amending the law relating to soldiers' relief by cities and towns came before the Legislature of 1903 through a bill (House, No. 1481) which provided that all disbursements of such relief should be reimbursed from

the treasury of the Commonwealth. The bill passed the House, but failed in the Senate.

As the provisions of the bill involved a radical departure from all previous legislation relating to State and military aid, and entailed a very large expense to the State, estimated at three-quarters of a million dollars annually, and as the details and effects of the proposed law were never thoroughly considered by any committee of the General Court, it seems advisable at this time to set forth some of the peculiar features of the bill, and the results if enacted into law.

The soldiers' relief law, sections 18 and 19, chapter 79, Revised Laws, provides for assistance, when necessary, to certain persons, wholly at the expense of the city or town in which the person has a legal settlement. Recipients of this relief are classified as follows: —

1. Soldiers and sailors of other States, having moved into this State and gained legal settlements by residence and taxes; and their wives, widows, dependent fathers and mothers, and children under the age of sixteen years.

2. Certain soldiers and sailors belonging to Massachusetts by credit and quota, and their dependents, as classed above, in cases where only the soldier or sailor alone is eligible to receive the limit of State aid, and where the pension and aid are insufficient to meet the wants of the whole family especially if there are several young children.

3. Wives, widows and dependent fathers and mothers now receiving the limit of State aid (\$4 a month), and where age and necessities require more relief.

In reference to the first class, *i.e.*, soldiers who served on the quota of other States, and have moved into Massachusetts and acquired settlements, it is difficult to see on what grounds of equity or fairness the State at large should be taxed to support this class of persons, and thus relieve the municipality of expense that legally and justly belongs to it.

More particularly is shown the extremely unjust discrimination of the proposed law in this respect, when we consider the fact that in all cases where Massachusetts soldiers and sailors draw military aid, based on legal settlements, one-



half only of the aid given is charged to the Commonwealth; that is, the State shares equally with the municipality in the expense of assistance. Thus it appears that a soldier credited to another State, by moving into Massachusetts, gaining a settlement, and applying for soldiers' relief, would be provided for wholly at the expense of the State, and at double the cost of one of our own soldiers.

Such a law would be a standing invitation to soldiers and sailors of other States to move into Massachusetts, and secure support and consideration that our own soldiers have never been eligible to receive under any law since the close of the war of the rebellion.

Under such a law it would be quite possible for cities and towns to completely nullify the military aid law, and be relieved of all expense by simply calling the aid furnished soldiers' relief, and charge the whole amount to the Commonwealth.

Another notable and fatal defect in the proposed law is the lack of provision for the thorough supervision and control by the State aid department of disbursements, and the loose, unsafe method of certifying the expense to the Treasurer of the Commonwealth. Comparing, in these respects, the proposed amendment with the requirements of regular State and military aid laws embodied in chapter 79, Revised Laws, the wide divergence from safe and long-established custom will be quickly seen. On the whole, it would seem to be impossible to formulate a more inconsistent and indefensible proposition and enact it into law.

#### PENSION DEPARTMENT.

Deputy Commissioner Col. J. B. Parsons furnishes the following statements relating to the business of the office under his immediate charge:—

The only pension legislation enacted by Congress during the last year was the increasing of pensions of survivors of the Mexican war to \$12 per month; the raising of pensions for total deafness, due to causes originating in the service, to \$40 per month; and the increasing of pensions for loss of a leg or an arm, as follows:—

For the loss of one hand or one foot, or total disability in the same, to \$40 per month.

For the loss of an arm at or above the elbow, or a leg at or above the knee, to \$46 per month.

For the loss of an arm at the shoulder, or a leg at the hip joint, or where the same is in such condition as to prevent the use of an artificial limb, to \$55 per month.

For the loss of one hand and one foot, or total disability by reason of the same, \$60 per month.

For the loss of both feet, \$100 per month.

This act applies only to those who are already in receipt of a pension, or who shall hereafter be pensioned for the loss of an arm or a leg, or total disability therefrom, the same having been incurred during services and in the line of duty. No applications need be made for the increases, as the pension agents were directed to pay the additional amounts to those entitled who were on the rolls, without applications.

One visit to Washington was made during the year, for the purpose of personally investigating some complicated cases, and to keep in touch with the Pension Bureau and the different departments of the Army and Navy with which we have more or less correspondence. In all departments the most courteous treatment was received, and our relations with the different Bureaus is all that could be desired. I wish particularly to thank the officials of the Pension Bureau and the auditors of the War and Navy departments for the respectful and courteous manner in which our calls upon them are attended to.

I desire to call attention to the efficient and responsible work performed by Miss Louisa C. Evans, who, since the consolidation of the departments of State aid and pensions, has been doing the work in this office heretofore performed by a male clerk who received \$1,800 a year. In view of the additional duties and responsibility attaching to the position of first clerk, and the valuable service which, by long training and experience, she is able to render the State, I respectfully recommend that the salary of Miss Evans be raised from \$1,000 to \$1,200 a year.



Business transacted during the year ending Dec. 31, 1903:—

Total number of claims filed, 1,462, classified as follows:—

Soldiers (original), . . . . .	274
Increases, . . . . .	419
Widows (original), . . . . .	273
Widows (accrued), . . . . .	230
Reimbursement, . . . . .	71
Pay and bounty, . . . . .	21
Wives (one-half pension), . . . . .	8
Mothers, . . . . .	10
Fathers, . . . . .	5
Sisters, . . . . .	1
Child over sixteen, . . . . .	1
Guardians, . . . . .	6
Restoration, . . . . .	36
New certificates, . . . . .	23
Transfers, . . . . .	11
Correction of name, . . . . .	3
Certificate of discharge, . . . . .	1
Re-muster, . . . . .	1
Removal charge desertion, . . . . .	1
Wife to draw without guardianship, . . . . .	2
Old claims, . . . . .	65
Total, . . . . .	1,462
Number of claims allowed, . . . . .	832
Number of claims rejected, . . . . .	457
Amount collected, . . . . .	\$63,051 05

Several thousand pension vouchers were executed during the year.

Respectfully submitted,

J. B. PARSONS,

*Deputy Commissioner.*

I concur fully with Colonel Parsons's recommendation to increase the salary of Miss Evans to \$1,200 a year. Her long and faithful service in the pension agency, with her pronounced ability in the prosecution of pension and other claims against the United States, fairly entitle her to the favorable consideration of the State.

CHARLES W. HASTINGS,

*Commissioner of State Aid and Pensions.*

CHAPTER I. THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

THE first discovery of America was made by Christopher Columbus in 1492.

He sailed from Spain on the 3rd of September, and after a long and dangerous voyage, he reached the island of San Salvador on the 12th of October.

He then sailed on to the island of Cuba, and then to the island of Hispaniola.

He then sailed on to the island of Puerto Rico, and then to the island of St. John.

He then sailed on to the island of St. Thomas, and then to the island of St. Peter.

He then sailed on to the island of St. Paul, and then to the island of St. Vincent.

He then sailed on to the island of St. Lucia, and then to the island of St. Kitts.

He then sailed on to the island of St. Eustace, and then to the island of St. Andrew.

He then sailed on to the island of St. George, and then to the island of St. James.

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